

COUNTRY DATA: MALAYSIA : Information from the CIA World Factbook

INTRODUCTION

During the late 18th and 19th centuries, Great Britain established colonies and protectorates in the area of current Malaysia; these were occupied by Japan from 1942 to 1945. In 1948, the British-ruled territories on the Malay Peninsula formed the Federation of Malaya, which became independent in 1957. Malaysia was formed in 1963 when the former British colonies of Singapore and the East Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak on the northern coast of Borneo joined the Federation. The first several years of the country's history were marred by a Communist insurgency, Indonesian confrontation with Malaysia, Philippine claims to Sabah, and Singapore's secession from the Federation in 1965. During the 22-year term of Prime Minister MAHATHIR bin Mohamad (1981-2003), Malaysia was successful in diversifying its economy from dependence on exports of raw materials to expansion in manufacturing, services, and tourism. Current Prime Minister Mohamed NAJIB bin Abdul Razak (in office since April 2009) has continued these pro-business policies.

GEOGRAPHY

Location	Southeastern Asia, peninsula bordering Thailand and northern one-third of the island of Borneo, bordering Indonesia, Brunei, and the South China Sea, south of Vietnam
Area	total: 329,847 sq km Land: 328,657 sq km Water: 1,190 sq km
Climate	tropical; annual southwest and northeast monsoons
Natural Resources	tin, petroleum, timber, copper, iron ore, natural gas, bauxite
Total Renewable Water Resources	580 cu km
Freshwater Withdrawal	Total: 9.02 cu km/yr Per capita: 356 cu m/yr
Natural Hazards	flooding; landslides; forest fires
Environmental Issues	air pollution from industrial and vehicular emissions; water pollution from raw sewage; deforestation; smoke/haze from Indonesian forest fires

PEOPLE

Population	28,728,607 (July 2011 est.)
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Ethnic Groups	Malay 50.4%, Chinese 23.7%, indigenous 11%, Indian 7.1%, other 7.8%
Religions	Muslim 60.4%, Buddhist 19.2%, Christian 9.1%, Hindu 6.3%, Confucianism, Taoism, other traditional Chinese religions 2.6%, other or unknown 1.5%, none 0.8%
Languages	Bahasa Malaysia (official), English, Chinese, Tamil, Telegu, Malayalam, Panjabi, Thai
Literacy Rate	total: 88.7% Male: 92% Female: 85.4%
Major Infectious Diseases	
GOVERNMENT	
Type	constitutional monarchy
Independence	31 August 1957 (from the UK)
Constitution	31 August 1957; amended many times the latest in 2007
Legal System	based on English common law; judicial review of legislative acts in the Federal Court at request of supreme head of the federation; Islamic law is applied to Muslims for family law and religion; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction
ECONOMY	
Agricultural Products	Rubber, Palm oil, cocoa, rice; subsistence crops, coconuts, timber, pepper
Industries	Rubber and oil palm processing and manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, medical technology, electronics, tin mining and smelting, logging, timber processing, agriculture processing, petroleum production and refining.
Import commodities	electronics, machinery, petroleum products, plastics, vehicles, iron and steel products, chemicals
Import Partners	China 12.6%, Japan 12.6%, Singapore 11.4%, US 10.7%, Thailand 6.2%, Indonesia 5.6%
Export Commodities	electronic equipment, petroleum and liquefied natural gas, wood and wood products, palm oil, rubber, textiles, chemicals
Export Partners	Singapore 13.4%, China 12.6%, Japan 10.4%, US 9.5%, Thailand 5.3%, Hong Kong 5.1%
Per Capita GDP	\$14,7000 (2010 est.) \$14,000 (2009 est.) \$14,500 (2008 est.)
Population below poverty line	3.6%

*CITATIONS: All information included above is extracted from the CIA World Factbook except where noted.